



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities; Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities; and Educational Technology, Media, and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities Programs--National Technical Assistance Center for Postsecondary Education and Training for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

AGENCY: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education (Department) is issuing a notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2021 for the National Technical Assistance Center for Postsecondary Education and Training for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Assistance Listing Number 84.326D. This notice relates to the approved information collection under OMB control number 1820-0028.

DATES:

Applications Available: [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: [INSERT DATE 120 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER.]

ADDRESSES: For the addresses for obtaining and submitting an application, please refer to our Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on February 13, 2019 (84 FR 3768), and available at www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Louise Tripoli, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, room 5124, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-5076. Telephone: (202) 245-7554. Email: Louise.Tripoli@ed.gov.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or a text telephone (TTY), call the Federal Relay Service (FRS), toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: Funds from the following three

Department programs support this competition: the Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities (TA&D) program; the Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities (PD) program; and the

Educational Technology, Media, and Materials for
Individuals with Disabilities (ETechM2) program.

The purpose of the TA&D program is to promote academic achievement and to improve results for children with disabilities by providing technical assistance (TA), supporting model demonstration projects, disseminating useful information, and implementing activities that are supported by scientifically based research. The purposes of the PD program are to (1) help address State-identified needs for personnel--in special education, related services, early intervention, and regular education--to work with children and youth with disabilities; and (2) ensure that those personnel have the skills and knowledge--derived from practices that have been determined through research and experience to be successful--that are needed to serve those children. Finally, the purposes of the ETechM2 program are to (1) improve results for children with disabilities by promoting the development, demonstration, and use of technology; (2) support educational activities designed to be of educational value in the classroom for students with disabilities; (3) provide support for captioning and video description that is appropriate for use in the classroom; and (4) provide accessible educational materials to students with disabilities in a timely manner.

Priority: This competition includes one absolute priority. In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b) (2) (v), this priority is from allowable activities specified in the statute (see sections 662(c) (2), 663(c) (8) (C), 674(b) and (c), and 681(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); 20 U.S.C. 1462(c) (2), 1463(c) (8) (C), 1474(b) and (c), and 1481(d)).

Absolute Priority: For FY 2021 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c) (3), we consider only applications that meet this priority.

This priority is:

National Technical Assistance Center for Postsecondary Education and Training for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Background:

Section 682(d) (1) (B) of IDEA requires the Secretary to ensure that, for each fiscal year, not less than \$4,000,000 is provided, under subparts 2 and 3 of IDEA, to address the postsecondary, vocational, technical, continuing, and adult education needs of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. The Department intends to build on current efforts to improve outcomes in postsecondary education and training for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing by funding a TA center dedicated to improving the

collaboration among postsecondary institutions, State educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), State vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies, VR service providers, and other relevant organizations and public agencies.

Many people have low expectations of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Deaf individuals' expectations about their abilities and future educational attainment do not develop in a vacuum--parents, teachers, and other professionals make a significant contribution to how those expectations and beliefs are formed. Parental expectations are an important contributor to long-term outcomes (e.g., living independently, enrolling in and completing college) of deaf individuals. Teachers of deaf students can provide support and guidance through sharing high expectations for their students' achievement, teaching them to be self-advocates, and supporting their healthy self-concept and social emotional development. However, there remains a significant need to educate parents, teachers, and professionals about deaf individuals' true potential for success.

Continuing education and training after high school can play a major role in overall quality of life. Educational attainment is linked to many life outcomes, including physical health, personal stability, community involvement, among others. Educational attainment also

contributes to increased employment opportunities, career advancement, and earnings. For deaf people, continuing education and training after high school appears to be an important component of narrowing the employment gap between deaf and hearing people. In 2017, 83.7 percent of deaf adults in the United States had successfully completed high school, compared to 89.4 percent of hearing adults (Garberoglio et al., 2019).

Although an increasing number of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing are attending postsecondary education and training programs, they have poor rates of completion compared to their non-disabled peers, which is often due to inadequate postsecondary skill preparation. National data shows that in 2017 only 5 percent of deaf people were enrolled in postsecondary institutions of any type, compared to 11 percent of hearing people (Garberoglio et al., 2019). In addition, data from the 2017 American Community Survey showed that only 18.8 percent of deaf adults in the United States had completed a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 34 percent of hearing adults (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2019).

Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing have unique and varying communication and language barriers that require a range of accommodations for success in postsecondary education and training settings. For example, different accommodations are needed for a student

who has hearing aids or a cochlear implant and uses oral-auditory strategies, a student with a cochlear implant who uses sign language in addition to oral-auditory strategies, and a student who uses sign language only. Postsecondary institutions must be well-informed about relevant requirements and the various accommodations that may be appropriate for students who are deaf or hard of hearing (e.g., oral transliteration services, sign language transliteration, and sign language interpreting and transcription services).

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (ADA), outline postsecondary institutions' obligations to ensure that they do not discriminate on the basis of disability. These obligations include providing academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services for students with disabilities (28 CFR 35.160-35.164; 28 CFR 36.303; 34 CFR 104.44). With the rapid pace of technological advancement and the increasing sophistication of technology, it is important for personnel at postsecondary institutions, other relevant organizations, and public agencies to stay current on available technology and policies to ensure communication access for their deaf or hard of hearing students. For example, personnel must be knowledgeable about a variety of interpreting, transcription, and note-taking services and remote or on-

site captioning technologies (e.g., C-Print or Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART)), as well as assistive listening devices that may serve as effective accommodations for some students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Individuals with disabilities, including those who are deaf or hard of hearing, often need to simultaneously access services from several different agencies to successfully meet their needs. To address the diverse and complex needs of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families, policymakers and other professionals have stressed the importance of ensuring individuals with disabilities have access to a comprehensive set of services and supports to help them develop the skills they will need to access and persevere in postsecondary education and training settings. Currently, no single system or agency is responsible for providing all the necessary supports to help individuals with disabilities develop these essential skills. Providing support for improved interagency collaboration at State and local levels may produce better outcomes in postsecondary education and training for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing (Garberoglio et al., 2020).

Priority:

The purpose of this priority is to fund a cooperative agreement to establish and operate a National Technical

Assistance Center for Postsecondary Education and Training for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. This Center will support postsecondary education through its work with postsecondary institutions, SEAs, LEAs, State VR agencies, VR service providers, and other relevant organizations and public agencies, to more effectively address the postsecondary, vocational, technical, continuing, and adult education (postsecondary education and training) needs of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, including those who have co-occurring disabilities, and those who are English learners. The Center will foster collaboration among postsecondary institutions, SEAs, LEAs, State VR agencies, VR service providers, and other relevant organizations and public agencies to support improved outcomes for deaf or hard of hearing transition-aged youth.

The Center must achieve, at a minimum, the following expected outcomes:

(a) Increased numbers of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing who are admitted to, persist in, and complete postsecondary, vocational, technical, and continuing and adult education and training, including adult basic education and developmental education programs;

(b) Improved collaboration among postsecondary institutions, SEAs, LEAs, State VR agencies, VR service providers, and other relevant organizations and public

agencies so they are more effective at the following activities:

(1) Identifying roles, responsibilities, and procedures for outreach to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and who are interested in pursuing postsecondary education and training, including outreach to secondary school students who have identified postsecondary education and training goals as part of an individualized education program or individualized plan for employment;

(2) Identifying and providing education and employment training opportunities for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and who are not college bound;

(3) Improving the ability of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to be effective self-advocates in postsecondary education and training settings;

(4) Providing TA and services to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families; and

(5) Implementing evidence-based practices¹ (EBPs) and strategies designed to increase the number of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing who, without requiring remedial coursework, are admitted to, persist in, and complete college or other postsecondary education and training;

¹ For the purposes of this priority, "evidence-based practices" means practices that, at a minimum, demonstrate a rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1), where a key project component included in the project's logic model is informed by research or evaluation findings that suggest the project component is likely to improve relevant outcomes.

(c) An increased body of knowledge on how to effectively utilize technology to promote access and provide accommodations (e.g., high-quality captioning, note-taking, and interpreting services) for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing in postsecondary education and training settings;

(d) Expanded dissemination of lessons learned from implementing EBPs and strategies to inform national, State, and local efforts to improve postsecondary education and training outcomes for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing; and

(e) Improved capacity of postsecondary institutions' career planning and placement offices to serve deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

In addition to these programmatic requirements, to be considered for funding under this priority, applicants must meet the application and administrative requirements in this priority, which are:

(a) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Significance," how the proposed project will--

(1) Address the training and information needs of postsecondary institutions, SEAs, LEAs, State VR agencies, VR service providers, and other relevant organizations and public agencies for better implementing evidence-based practices and strategies that will increase the number of

individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing who, without remedial coursework, are admitted to, persist in, and complete college or other postsecondary education and training, including adult basic education and developmental education programs. To meet this requirement, the applicant must--

(i) Present applicable national and State data demonstrating the training needs of postsecondary institutions, SEAs, LEAs, State VR agencies, VR service providers, and other relevant organizations and public agencies to better implement EBPs and strategies that will increase enrollment and completion in postsecondary education and training for students who are deaf or hard of hearing; and

(ii) Identify current issues and policy initiatives in secondary transition, postsecondary education, career preparation, and employment for students who are deaf or hard of hearing; and

(2) Address the current and emerging needs of postsecondary institutions, SEAs, LEAs, State VR agencies, VR service providers, and other relevant organizations and public agencies for better implementing strategies to improve postsecondary education and training outcomes for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

(b) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Quality of project services," how the proposed project will--

(1) Ensure equal access and treatment for members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. To meet this requirement, the applicant must describe how it will--

(i) Identify the needs of the intended recipients for TA and information; and

(ii) Ensure that services and products meet the needs of the intended recipients of the grant;

(2) Achieve its goals, objectives, and intended outcomes. To meet this requirement, the applicant must provide--

(i) Measurable intended project outcomes; and

(ii) In Appendix A, the logic model (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1) by which the proposed project will achieve its intended outcomes that depicts, at a minimum, the goals, activities, outputs, and intended outcomes of the proposed project;

(3) Use a conceptual framework (and provide a copy in Appendix A) to develop project plans and activities, describing any underlying concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, or theories, as well as the presumed

relationships or linkages among these variables, and any empirical support for this framework;

Note: The following websites provide more information on logic models and conceptual frameworks:

www.osepideasthatwork.org/logicModel and

www.osepideasthatwork.org/resources-grantees/program-areas/ta-ta/tad-project-logic-model-and-conceptual-framework.

(4) Be based on current research and make use of EBPs. To meet this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) The current research on the most effective ways to support students who are deaf or hard of hearing in postsecondary education and training;

(ii) The current research about adult learning principles and implementation science that will inform the proposed TA; and

(iii) How the proposed project will incorporate current research and practices in the development and delivery of its products and services;

(5) Develop products and provide services that are of high quality and sufficient intensity and duration to achieve the intended outcomes of the proposed project. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) How it will develop and use state-of-the-art communication tools and platforms, including virtual

conferences, social media, and searchable databases, and the latest knowledge translation methods and techniques to improve postsecondary opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

(ii) Its proposed approach to universal, general TA,² which must identify the intended recipients, including the type and number of recipients, that will receive the products and services, a description of the products and services that the Center proposes to make available, and the expected impact of those products and services under this approach;

(iii) Its proposed approach to targeted, specialized TA,³ which must identify--

(A) The intended recipients, including the type and number of recipients, that will receive the products and services, a description of the products and services that the Center proposes to make available, and the expected

² "Universal, general TA" means TA and information provided to independent users through their own initiative, resulting in minimal interaction with TA center staff and including one-time, invited or offered conference presentations by TA center staff. This category of TA also includes information or products, such as newsletters, guidebooks, or research syntheses, downloaded from the TA center's website by independent users. Brief communications by TA center staff with recipients, either by telephone or email, are also considered universal, general TA.

³ "Targeted, specialized TA" means TA services based on needs common to multiple recipients and not extensively individualized. A relationship is established between the TA recipient and one or more TA center staff. This category of TA includes one-time, labor-intensive events, such as facilitating strategic planning or hosting regional or national conferences. It can also include episodic, less labor-intensive events that extend over a period of time, such as facilitating a series of conference calls on single or multiple topics that are designed around the needs of the recipients. Facilitating communities of practice can also be considered targeted, specialized TA.

impact of those products and services under this approach;
and

(B) Its proposed approach to measure the readiness of potential TA recipients to work with the project, assessing, at a minimum, their current infrastructure, available resources, and ability to build capacity at the local level; and

(iv) Its proposed approach to intensive, sustained TA,⁴ which must identify--

(A) The intended recipients, including the type and number of recipients from a variety of settings and geographic distribution, that will receive the products and services designed to impact the postsecondary education and training needs of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing;

(B) Its proposed approach to measure the readiness of postsecondary institutions, SEAs, LEAs, State VR agencies, VR service providers, and other relevant organizations and public agencies to work with the project, including their commitment to the initiative, alignment of the initiative to their needs, current infrastructure, available

⁴ "Intensive, sustained TA" means TA services often provided on-site and requiring a stable, ongoing relationship between the TA center staff and the TA recipient. "TA services" are defined as negotiated series of activities designed to reach a valued outcome. This category of TA should result in changes to policy, program, practice, or operations that support increased recipient capacity or improved outcomes at one or more systems levels.

resources, and ability to build capacity at the local, district, or State level;

(C) Its proposed plan for assisting postsecondary institutions, SEAs, LEAs, State VR agencies, VR service providers, and other relevant organizations and public agencies to build training systems that include professional development based on adult learning principles and coaching; and

(D) Its proposed plan for working with students, families, postsecondary institutions, SEAs, LEAs, State VR agencies, VR service providers, and other relevant organizations and public agencies at the State and local levels (e.g., TA providers, schools, transition coordinators, guidance counselors, career and technical education educators, Department of Labor personnel, private industry, postsecondary education professionals) to ensure there is communication between each level and there are systems in place to effectively address the postsecondary education and training needs of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, including those who have co-occurring disabilities and those who are English learners;

(E) Its proposed plan for working with students, families, postsecondary institutions, SEAs, LEAs, State VR agencies, VR service providers, and other relevant organizations and public agencies at the State and local levels to focus on building capacity of personnel to work

with non-college-bound deaf and hard of hearing individuals to build up their technical, academic, and soft skills for employment opportunities; and

(v) How the proposed project will use non-project resources to achieve the intended project outcomes.

(6) Develop products and implement services that maximize efficiency. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) How the proposed project will use technology to achieve the intended project outcomes;

(ii) With whom the proposed project will collaborate and the intended outcomes of this collaboration; and

(iii) How the proposed project will use non-project resources to achieve the intended project outcomes; and

(7) Develop a dissemination plan that describes how the applicant will systematically distribute information, products, and services to varied intended audiences, using a variety of dissemination strategies, to promote awareness and use of the Center's products and services.

(c) In the narrative section of the application under "Quality of the project evaluation," include an evaluation plan for the project as described in the following paragraphs. The evaluation plan must describe: measures of progress in implementation, including the criteria for determining the extent to which the project's products and services have met the goals for reaching its target

population; measures of intended outcomes or results of the project's activities in order to evaluate those activities; and how well the goals or objectives of the proposed project, as described in its logic model, have been met.

The applicant must provide an assurance that, in designing the evaluation plan, it will--

(1) Designate, with the approval of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) project officer, a project liaison with sufficient dedicated time, experience in evaluation, and knowledge of the project to work in collaboration with the Center to Improve Program and Project Performance (CIPP),⁵ the project director, and the OSEP project officer on the following tasks:

(i) Revise the logic model submitted in the application to provide for a more comprehensive measurement of implementation and outcomes and to reflect any changes or clarifications to the model discussed at the kick-off meeting;

(ii) Refine the evaluation design and instrumentation proposed in the application consistent with the revised logic model and using the most rigorous design suitable

⁵ The major tasks of CIPP are to guide, coordinate, and oversee the design of formative evaluations for every large discretionary investment (i.e., those awarded \$500,000 or more per year and required to participate in the 3+2 process) in OSEP's Technical Assistance and Dissemination; Personnel Development; Parent Training and Information Centers; and Educational Technology, Media, and Materials programs. The efforts of CIPP are expected to enhance individual project evaluation plans by providing expert and unbiased TA in designing the evaluations with due consideration of the project's budget. CIPP does not function as a third-party evaluator.

(e.g., prepare evaluation questions about significant program processes and outcomes; develop quantitative or qualitative data collections that permit both the collection of progress data, including fidelity of implementation, as appropriate, and the assessment of project outcomes; and identify analytic strategies); and

(iii) Revise the evaluation plan submitted in the application such that it clearly--

(A) Specifies the evaluation questions, measures, and associated instruments or sources for data appropriate to answer these questions, suggests analytic strategies for those data, provides a timeline for conducting the evaluation, and includes staff assignments for completing the evaluation activities;

(B) Delineates the data expected to be available by the end of the second project year for use during the project's evaluation (3+2 review) for continued funding described under the heading Fourth and Fifth Years of the Project; and

(C) Can be used to assist the project director and the OSEP project officer, with the assistance of CIPP, as needed, to specify the project performance measures to be addressed in the project's annual performance report;

(2) Dedicate sufficient staff time and other resources during the first six months of the project to collaborate with CIPP staff, including regular meetings

(e.g., weekly, biweekly, or monthly) with CIPP and the OSEP project officer, in order to accomplish the tasks described in paragraph (c)(1) of this section; and

(3) Dedicate sufficient funds in each budget year to cover the costs of carrying out the tasks described in paragraphs (c)(1) and (2) of this section and revising and implementing the evaluation plan. Please note in your budget narrative the funds dedicated for this activity.

(d) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Adequacy of resources and quality of project personnel," how--

(1) The proposed project will encourage applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability, as appropriate;

(2) The proposed key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors have the qualifications and experience to carry out the proposed activities and achieve the project's intended outcomes;

(3) The applicant and any key partners have adequate resources to carry out the proposed activities; and

(4) The proposed costs are reasonable in relation to the anticipated results and benefits.

(e) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Quality of the management plan," how--

(1) The proposed management plan will ensure that the project's intended outcomes will be achieved on time and within budget. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) Clearly defined responsibilities for key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors, as applicable; and

(ii) Timelines and milestones for accomplishing the project tasks;

(2) Key project personnel and any consultants and subcontractors will be allocated and how these allocations are appropriate and adequate to achieve the project's intended outcomes;

(3) The proposed management plan includes a minimum 0.50 full-time equivalent (FTE) position for the project director;

(4) The proposed management plan will ensure that the products and services provided are of high quality, relevant, and useful to recipients; and

(5) The proposed project will benefit from a diversity of perspectives, including those of families, educators, TA providers, researchers, and policy makers, among others, in its development and operation.

(f) Address the following application requirements. The applicant must--

(1) Include, in Appendix A, personnel-loading charts and timelines, as applicable, to illustrate the management plan described in the narrative;

(2) Include, in the budget, attendance at the following:

(i) A kick-off meeting either virtually or in Washington, DC, after receipt of the award, and an annual planning meeting either virtually or in Washington, DC, with the OSEP project officer and other relevant staff during each subsequent year of the project period.

Note: Within 30 days of receipt of the award, a post-award teleconference must be held between the OSEP project officer and the grantee's project director or other authorized representative;

(ii) A project directors' conference either virtually or in Washington, DC, during each year of the project period;

(iii) Two annual two-day trips, either virtually or in Washington DC, to attend Department briefings, Department-sponsored conferences, and other meetings, as requested by OSEP; and

(iv) A one-day intensive 3+2 review meeting either virtually or in Washington, DC, during the second year of the project period;

(3) Include, in the budget, a line item for an annual set-aside of 5 percent of the grant amount to support

emerging needs that are consistent with the proposed project's intended outcomes, as those needs are identified in consultation with, and approved by, the OSEP project officer. With approval from the OSEP project officer, the project must reallocate any remaining funds from this annual set-aside no later than the end of the third quarter of each budget period; and

(4) Maintain a high-quality website, with an easy-to-navigate design, that meets government or industry-recognized standards for accessibility;

(5) Ensure that annual project progress toward meeting project goals is posted on the project website; and

(6) Include, in Appendix A, an assurance to assist OSEP with the transfer of pertinent resources and products and to maintain the continuity of services to States during the transition to a new award at the end of this award period, as appropriate.

Fourth and Fifth Years of the Project:

In deciding whether to continue funding the project for the fourth and fifth years, the Secretary will consider the requirements of 34 CFR 75.253(a), including--

(a) The recommendations of a 3+2 review team consisting of experts who have experience and knowledge in providing technical assistance to personnel who work with deaf or hard of hearing students at the postsecondary education level. This review will be conducted during a

one-day intensive meeting that will be held during the last half of the second year of the project period;

(b) The timeliness with which, and how well, the requirements of the negotiated cooperative agreement have been or are being met by the project; and

(c) The quality, relevance, and usefulness of the project's products and services and the extent to which the project's products and services are aligned with the project's objectives and likely to result in the project achieving its intended outcomes.

Under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary may reduce continuation awards or discontinue awards in any year of the project period for excessive carryover balances or a failure to make substantial progress. The Department intends to closely monitor unobligated balances and substantial progress under this program and may reduce or discontinue funding accordingly.

References:

- Garberoglio, C. L., Guerra, D. H., Sanders, G. T., & Cawthon, S. W. (2020). Community-driven strategies for improving postsecondary outcomes of deaf people. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 165(3), 369-392. <https://doi.org/10.1353/aad.2020.0024>.
- Garberoglio, C. L., Palmer, J. L., Cawthon, S., & Sales, A. (2019). Deaf people and educational attainment in the United States: 2019. U.S. Department of Education,

Office of Special Education Programs, National Deaf
Center on Postsecondary Outcomes.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2018-2019). The American community
survey public use microdata sample (2017) [dataset].
[https://www2.census.gov/programs-](https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data/pums/2017/)
[surveys/acs/data/pums/2017/](https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data/pums/2017/).

Waiver of Proposed Rulemaking: Under the Administrative
Procedure Act (APA) (5 U.S.C. 553) the Department generally
offers interested parties the opportunity to comment on
proposed priorities. Section 681(d) of IDEA, however,
makes the public comment requirements of the APA
inapplicable to the priority in this notice.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1462, 1463, 1474, 1481, and
1482.

Note: Projects must be awarded and operated in a manner
consistent with the nondiscrimination requirements
contained in the U.S. Constitution and the Federal civil
rights laws.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department
General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 75, 77,
79, 81, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The Office of
Management and Budget Guidelines to Agencies on
Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in
2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of
the Department in 2 CFR part 3485. (c) The Uniform
Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit

Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 79 apply to all applicants except federally recognized Indian Tribes.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to institutions of higher education (IHEs) only.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Cooperative agreement.

Estimated Available Funds: Three programs plan to make available a total of \$4,000,000 for this competition in FY 2021: \$1,300,000 from the TA&D program; \$1,700,000 from the PD program; and \$1,000,000 from the ETechM2 program.

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in FY 2022 from the list of unfunded applications from this competition.

Maximum Award: We will not make an award exceeding \$4,000,000 for a single budget period of 12 months.

Estimated Number of Awards: 1.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice. In each budget period of 12 months, no more than \$1,300,000 may be budgeted under the TA&D program (consistent with section 663(c)(8)(C) of IDEA); no more than \$1,700,000 may be budgeted under the PD program (consistent with section 662(c)(2) of IDEA); and no more

than \$1,000,000 may be budgeted under the ETechM2 program (consistent with section 674(b) of IDEA). Applicants must separately budget for funds under each program.

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: SEAs; LEAs, including public charter schools that are considered LEAs under State law; IHEs; other public agencies; private nonprofit organizations; freely associated States and outlying areas; Indian Tribes or Tribal organizations; and for-profit organizations.

Note: If you are a nonprofit organization, under 34 CFR 75.51, you may demonstrate your nonprofit status by providing: (1) proof that the Internal Revenue Service currently recognizes the applicant as an organization to which contributions are tax deductible under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; (2) a statement from a State taxing body or the State attorney general certifying that the organization is a nonprofit organization operating within the State and that no part of its net earnings may lawfully benefit any private shareholder or individual; (3) a certified copy of the applicant's certificate of incorporation or similar document if it clearly establishes the nonprofit status of the applicant; or (4) any item described above if that item applies to a State or national parent organization,

together with a statement by the State or parent organization that the applicant is a local nonprofit affiliate.

2. a. Cost Sharing or Matching: This competition does not require cost sharing or matching.

b. Indirect Cost Rate Information: This program uses an unrestricted indirect cost rate. For more information regarding indirect costs, or to obtain a negotiated indirect cost rate, please see www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/intro.html.

c. Administrative Cost Limitation: This program does not include any program-specific limitation on administrative expenses. All administrative expenses must be reasonable and necessary and conform to Cost Principles described in 2 CFR part 200 subpart E of the Uniform Guidance.

3. Subgrantees: A grantee under this competition may not award subgrants to entities to directly carry out project activities described in its application. Under 34 CFR 75.708(e), a grantee may contract for supplies, equipment, and other services in accordance with 2 CFR part 200.

4. Other General Requirements:

a. Recipients of funding under this competition must make positive efforts to employ and advance in employment

qualified individuals with disabilities (see section 606 of IDEA) .

b. Applicants for, and recipients of, funding must, with respect to the aspects of their proposed project relating to the absolute priority, involve individuals with disabilities, or parents of individuals with disabilities ages birth through 26, in planning, implementing, and evaluating the project (see section 682(a)(1)(A) of IDEA) .

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Application Submission Instructions: Applicants are required to follow the Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on February 13, 2019 (84 FR 3768), and available at www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf, which contain requirements and information on how to submit an application.

2. Intergovernmental Review: This competition is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. Information about Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs under Executive Order 12372 is in the application package for this competition.

3. Funding Restrictions: We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

4. Recommended Page Limit: The application narrative is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. We recommend that you (1) limit the application narrative to no more than 50 pages and (2) use the following standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double-space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, reference citations, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, graphs, and screen shots.
- Use a font that is 12 point or larger.
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

The recommended page limit does not apply to the cover sheet; the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; the assurances and certifications; or the abstract (follow the guidance provided in the application package for completing the abstract), the table of contents, the list of priority requirements, the resumes, the reference list, the letters of support, or the appendices. However, the recommended page limit does apply to all of the application narrative, including all text in charts, tables, figures, graphs, and screen shots.

V. Application Review Information

1. Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 75.210 and are as follows:

(a) Significance (10 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

(ii) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project.

(b) Quality of project services (35 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.

(ii) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.

(iii) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(iv) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

(v) The extent to which the TA services to be provided by the proposed project involve the use of efficient strategies, including the use of technology, as appropriate, and the leveraging of non-project resources.

(c) Quality of the project evaluation (20 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

(ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies.

(iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(iv) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

(d) Adequacy of resources and quality of project personnel (15 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project and the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

(ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

(iii) The qualifications, including relevant training, experience, and independence, of the evaluator.

(iv) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.

(e) Quality of the management plan (20 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

(ii) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

(iii) The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project.

(iv) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the

business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.

2. Review and Selection Process: We remind potential applicants that in reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, the Secretary may consider, under 34 CFR 75.217(d)(3), the past performance of the applicant in carrying out a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Secretary may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality.

In addition, in making a competitive grant award, the Secretary requires various assurances, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

3. Additional Review and Selection Process Factors: In the past, the Department has had difficulty finding peer reviewers for certain competitions because so many individuals who are eligible to serve as peer reviewers have conflicts of interest. The standing panel requirements under section 682(b) of IDEA also have placed additional constraints on the availability of reviewers.

Therefore, the Department has determined that for some discretionary grant competitions, applications may be separated into two or more groups and ranked and selected for funding within specific groups. This procedure will make it easier for the Department to find peer reviewers by ensuring that greater numbers of individuals who are eligible to serve as reviewers for any particular group of applicants will not have conflicts of interest. It also will increase the quality, independence, and fairness of the review process, while permitting panel members to review applications under discretionary grant competitions for which they also have submitted applications.

4. Risk Assessment and Specific Conditions:

Consistent with 2 CFR 200.206, before awarding grants under this competition the Department conducts a review of the risks posed by applicants. Under 2 CFR 200.208, the Secretary may impose specific conditions, and under 2 CFR 3474.10, in appropriate circumstances, high-risk conditions on a grant if the applicant or grantee is not financially stable; has a history of unsatisfactory performance; has a financial or other management system that does not meet the standards in 2 CFR part 200, subpart D; has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant; or is otherwise not responsible.

5. Integrity and Performance System: If you are selected under this competition to receive an award that

over the course of the project period may exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000), under 2 CFR 200.206(a)(2) we must make a judgment about your integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards--that is, the risk posed by you as an applicant--before we make an award. In doing so, we must consider any information about you that is in the integrity and performance system (currently referred to as the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)), accessible through the System for Award Management. You may review and comment on any information about yourself that a Federal agency previously entered and that is currently in FAPIIS.

Please note that, if the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from the Federal Government exceeds \$10,000,000, the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, require you to report certain integrity information to FAPIIS semiannually. Please review the requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, if this grant plus all the other Federal funds you receive exceed \$10,000,000.

6. In General: In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department will review and consider

applications for funding pursuant to this notice inviting applications in accordance with--

(a) Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR 200.205);

(b) Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 115-232) (2 CFR 200.216);

(c) Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (2 CFR 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341);

(d) Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR 200.322); and

(e) Terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR 200.340).

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices: If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN); or we may send you an email containing a link to access an electronic version of your GAN. We may notify you informally, also.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements: We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. Open Licensing Requirements: Unless an exception applies, if you are awarded a grant under this competition, you will be required to openly license to the public grant deliverables created in whole, or in part, with Department grant funds. When the deliverable consists of modifications to pre-existing works, the license extends only to those modifications that can be separately identified and only to the extent that open licensing is

permitted under the terms of any licenses or other legal restrictions on the use of pre-existing works.

Additionally, a grantee that is awarded competitive grant funds must have a plan to disseminate these public grant deliverables. This dissemination plan can be developed and submitted after your application has been reviewed and selected for funding. For additional information on the open licensing requirements please refer to 2 CFR 3474.20.

4. Reporting: (a) If you apply for a grant under this competition, you must ensure that you have in place the necessary processes and systems to comply with the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 170 should you receive funding under the competition. This does not apply if you have an exception under 2 CFR 170.110(b).

(b) At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multiyear award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as directed by the Secretary under 34 CFR 75.118. The Secretary may also require more frequent performance reports under 34 CFR 75.720(c). For specific requirements on reporting, please go to www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html.

5. Performance Measures: For the purposes of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) and

reporting under 34 CFR 75.110, we have established a set of performance measures, including long-term measures, that are designed to yield information on various aspects of the effectiveness and quality of the Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities program. These measures are:

- Program Performance Measure 1: The percentage of technical assistance and dissemination products and services deemed to be of high quality by an independent review panel of experts qualified to review the substantive content of the products and services.

- Program Performance Measure 2: The percentage of special education technical assistance and dissemination products and services deemed by an independent review panel of qualified experts to be of high relevance to educational and early intervention policy or practice.

- Program Performance Measure 3: The percentage of all special education technical assistance and dissemination products and services deemed by an independent review panel of qualified experts to be useful in improving educational or early intervention policy or practice.

- Program Performance Measure 4: The cost efficiency of the Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities program includes the percentage of milestones achieved in the

current annual performance report period and the percentage of funds spent during the current fiscal year.

- Long-term Program Performance Measure: The percentage of States receiving special education technical assistance and dissemination services regarding scientifically or evidence-based practices for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities that successfully promote the implementation of those practices in school districts and service agencies.

The measures apply to projects funded under this competition, and grantees are required to submit data on these measures as directed by OSEP.

Grantees will be required to report information on their project's performance in annual and final performance reports to the Department (34 CFR 75.590).

The Department will also closely monitor the extent to which the products and services provided by the Center meet needs identified by stakeholders and may require the Center to report on such alignment in their annual and final performance reports.

6. Continuation Awards: In making a continuation award under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary considers, among other things: whether a grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the project; whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and

budget; and, if the Secretary has established performance measurement requirements, the performance targets in the grantee's approved application.

In making a continuation award, the Secretary also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

VII. Other Information

Accessible Format: On request to the program contact person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT, individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible format. The Department will provide the requestor with an accessible format that may include Rich Text Format (RTF) or text format (txt), a thumb drive, an MP3 file, braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc, or other accessible format.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the *Federal Register*. You may access the official edition of the *Federal Register* and the Code of Federal Regulations at www.govinfo.gov. At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published

in the *Federal Register*, in text or Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the *Federal Register* by using the article search feature at www.federalregister.gov. Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

David Cantrell,
*Deputy Director, Office of Special
Education Programs.
Delegated the authority to perform
the functions and duties of the
Assistant Secretary for the Office
of Special Education and
Rehabilitative Services.*

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